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Honorable Kristen Gillibrand

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

The New York State Association for Rural Health (NYSARH) is a not-for-profit, non-partisan, grassroots organization working to preserve and improve the health of the citizens in rural New York State.  The organization is affiliated with the National Rural Health Association.NYSARH collaborates on issues affecting the health and well-being of New York's rural residents. As a statewide organization advocating for the health of rural New Yorkers, NYSARH functions as the "voice for rural health."

As the Senate moves toward finalizing language for the bipartisan Infrastructure bill, we understand that access to Broadband will be included. We strongly support this effort and want to emphasize how important ‘last mile’ broadband is for rural communities. NYSARH hopes that the infrastructure funding will also be available to assist with rural public and hybrid transportation, which is essential for access to healthcare for lower-income and older rural residents. As you know, flooding causes significant damage in rural New York. We hope the Infrastructure bill can also fund some stormwater management projects.

We believe the Reconciliation bill will allow for additional initiatives. If this is so, we encourage you to advocate for funding for Social Determinants of Health, particularly nutrition. NYSARH has learned that there are several evidence-based programs loosely grouped under the label Food is Medicine that we support. NYSARH supports initiatives to expand the rural health workforce such as expanding residency opportunities and student loan forgiveness. Home Care and Caregiver supports are especially vulnerable in rural communities.

We would be pleased to provide additional information if needed.

Sincerely,